

TOMB RAIDER™

SACRED ARTIFACTS



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ANDWORLD DESIGN

Alcorno
25

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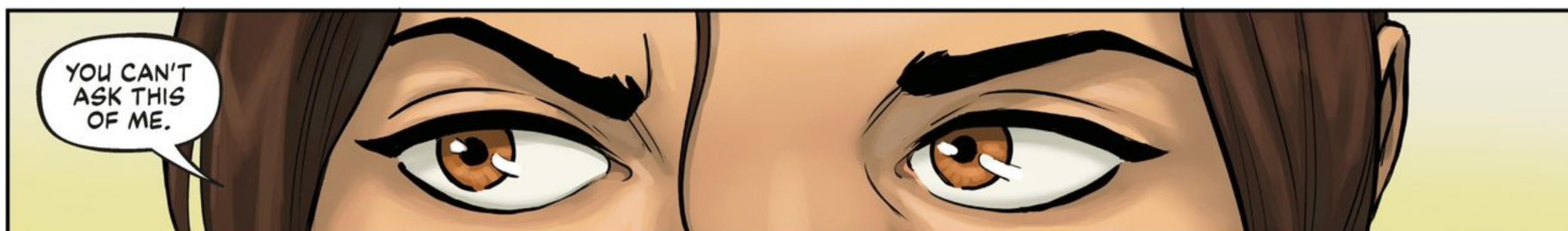
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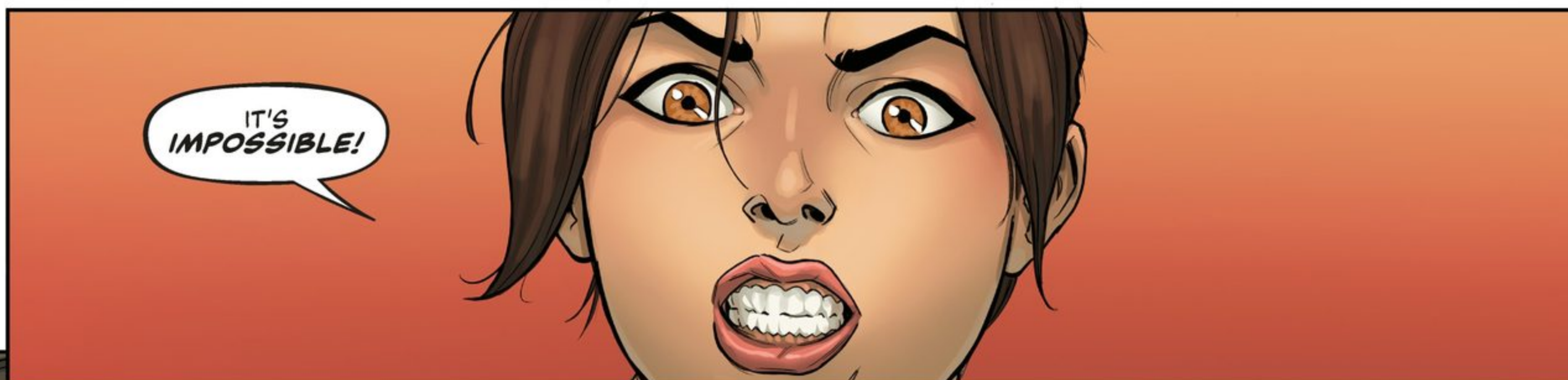
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YOU CAN'T
ASK THIS
OF ME.



I TRULY
DON'T KNOW
HOW YOU
EXPECT ME
TO DO IT.



IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE!

CROFT MANOR.



COME NOW, LARA,
THERE'S A WORLD OF
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
PROFOUND MUFFIN
AND **AGGRESSIVE**
NUTMEG.

THESE ARE
ALL **IDENTICAL**
AND I **REFUSE**
TO BE GASLIT
BY TILE!



I NEED A
BREAK.

SHALL I
DETERMINE
THE FATE OF
YOUR KITCHEN'S
TILE ALL ON MY
OWN, THEN?



WE ARE QUITE BEHIND ON GETTING NOTES TO THE BUILDERS. CAN I AT LEAST SEND THEM APPROVALS ON THE WINDOW TREATMENTS AND ENTRYWAY COLOR SCHEME?

I'M SO BAD AT THIS.

NONSENSE, YOU LEARNED TO TIE YOUR SHOES BEFORE NURSERY SCHOOL--



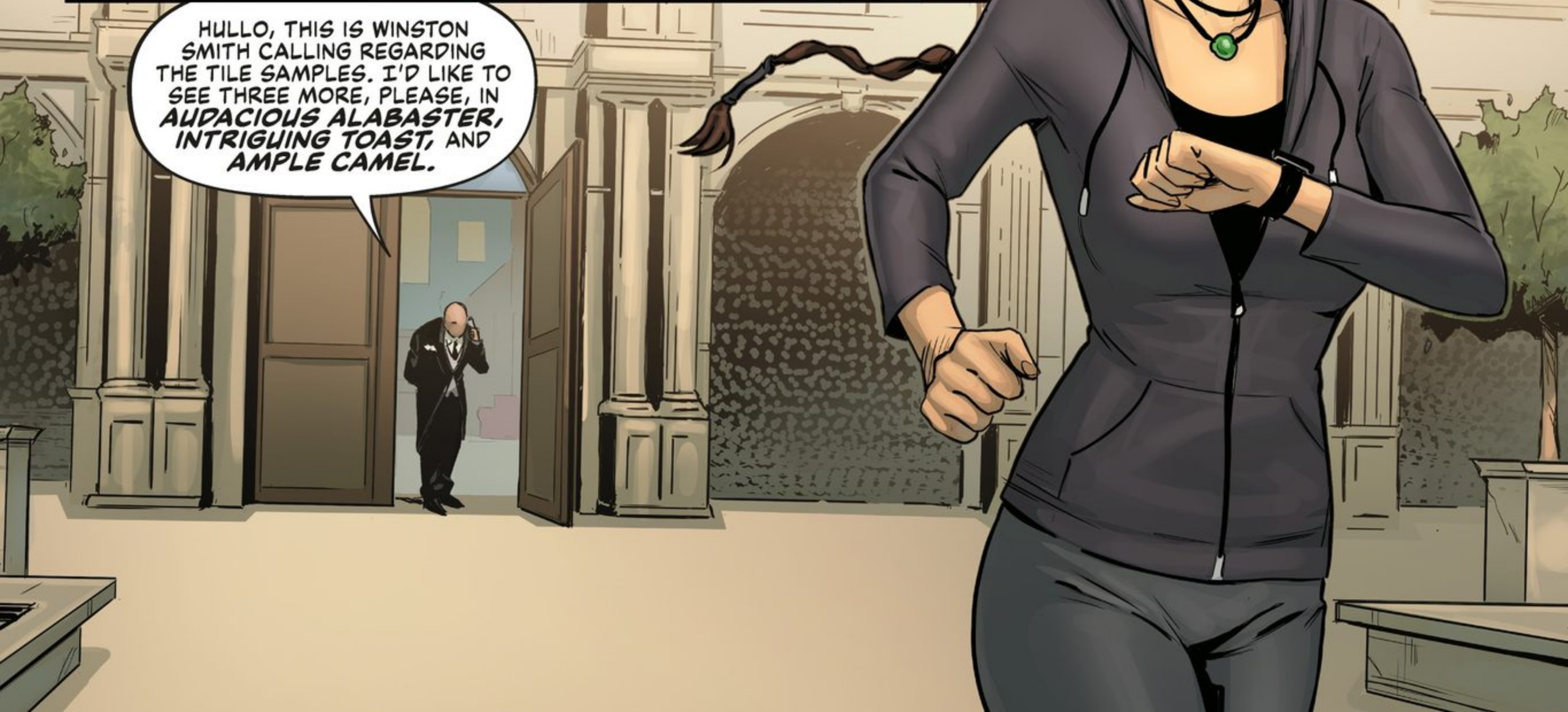
NO-- *THIS*. ALL OF THIS.

LET ME BURN OFF SOME TENSION AND WE'LL GET BACK TO IT OVER LUNCH.

THANK YOU, LARA. I DON'T MEAN TO BE A BOTHER, BUT THESE DECISIONS REALLY SHOULD BE COMING FROM YOU--



DO WHAT YOU THINK IS BEST. I TRUST YOU.



HULLO, THIS IS WINSTON SMITH CALLING REGARDING THE TILE SAMPLES. I'D LIKE TO SEE THREE MORE, PLEASE, IN **AUDACIOUS ALABASTER**, **INTRIGUING TOAST**, AND **AMPLE CAMEL**.



The prince stared at her, his jewel-red eyes flashing with annoyance. "The treaty with your realm requires me to wed a mortal, but I am under no obligation to like it."



"You dare to keep secrets from your betrothed, Prince Crater Mournsorrow?" he thundered. "It's a tattoo of my parrot, Ricky. He died," she explained. Crater's nostrils flared, feeding on her sadness like the demon lord he was--



I ORDERED THAI.

I FORGOT I'D MADE PLANS FOR SOMETHING FRENCH...



NORMALLY I WOULD OVERSEE YOUR LUGGAGE, BUT I ASSUME I WILL BE OCCUPIED WITH THE BUILDERS THIS AFTERNOON. CAN YOU MANAGE ON YOUR OWN OR SHALL I POSTPONE THE APPROVALS?

I CAN HANDLE PACKING. SORRY, WINSTON--IT'S A LAST-MINUTE TRIP.

UNDERSTOOD.



I'M SORRY,
I NEED TO BRING
WHAT?

OF COURSE
I HAVE EVENING
GOWNS, CARTER, BUT
WHAT **FOR?** I THOUGHT
YOU SAID YOU NEEDED
MY HELP WITH
A JOB--



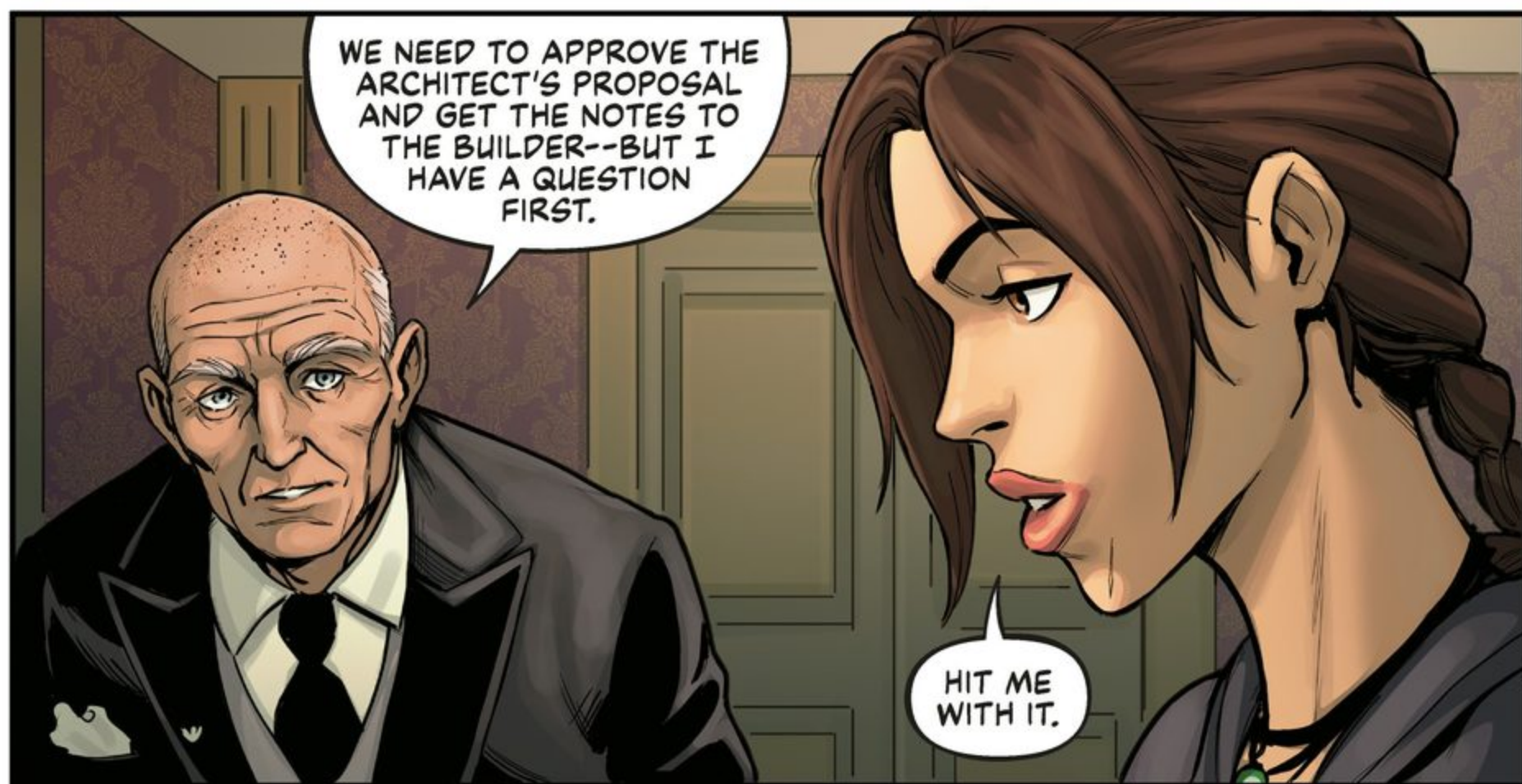
YES, IT
MATTERS! IF I DON'T
KNOW WHAT THE EVENT
IS, I CAN'T POSSIBLY
SELECT THE RIGHT
PIECE.

OH CHRIST,
DON'T TELL ME I
HAVE TO PRETEND
TO BE YOUR
GIRLFRIEND.

OH! YOU DO?
FASCINATING.
WHY ISN'T **SHE**
THE ONE GOING,
THEN?



HEY, CARTER.
I HAVE TO RUN.
YOU CAN TELL ME
MORE AT DINNER
TONIGHT.

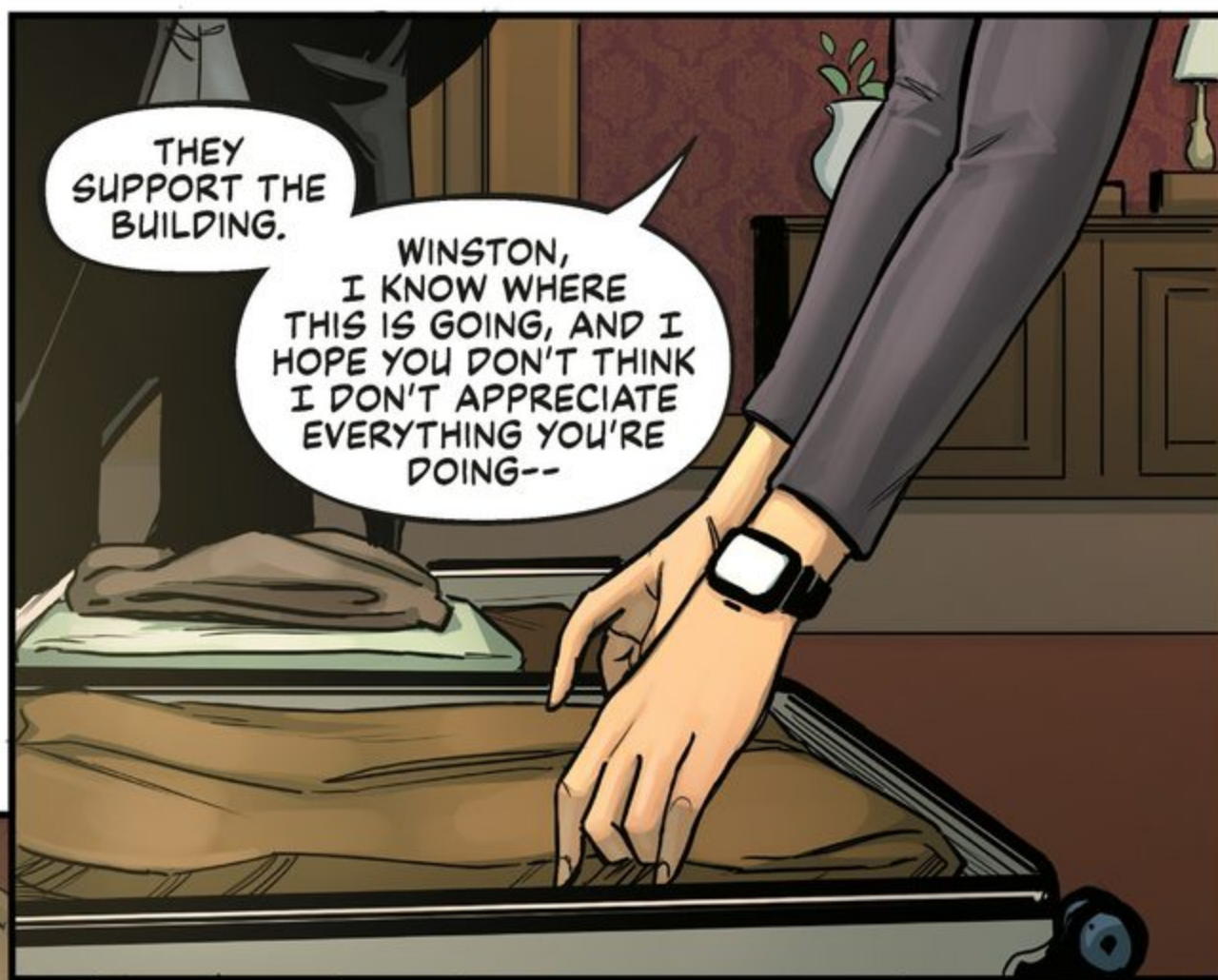


WE NEED TO APPROVE THE
ARCHITECT'S PROPOSAL
AND GET THE NOTES TO
THE BUILDER--BUT I
HAVE A QUESTION
FIRST.

HIT ME
WITH IT.



WHAT DO
YOU KNOW ABOUT
LOAD-BEARING
WALLS?



THEY SUPPORT THE BUILDING.

WINSTON, I KNOW WHERE THIS IS GOING, AND I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK I DON'T APPRECIATE EVERYTHING YOU'RE DOING--



PARTIAL MARKS.

LOAD-BEARING WALLS CONNECT TO THE FOUNDATION, TRANSFERRING THE WEIGHT OF THE BUILDING TO ITS STRONGEST POINT. WHEN YOU REMOVE ONE, YOU WILL AFFECT THE **ENTIRE STRUCTURE**.

REMOVE? YOU'RE NOT LEAVING, ARE YOU?



YOU GOOSE. I'M NOT THE LOAD-BEARING WALL. **YOU ARE.**

THIS IS **YOUR** HOME, **YOUR** LEGACY. YOU ARE WHAT CONNECTS BRICK AND MORTAR TO THE EARTH--TO THE BEDROCK OF THE CROFT FAMILY. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU FULLY REMOVE YOURSELF?

INSURANCE PREMIUMS MIGHT GO DOWN.

I DON'T MIND MANAGING THIS, LARA. NOT IF YOU NEED TO BEAR THE WEIGHT OF SOMETHING **BETTER** FOR YOU. I WANT YOU TO HAVE YOUR FIRE BACK, AND I KNOW THESE RENOVATIONS DON'T EXCITE YOU...



...BUT IF YOU'RE LEAVING BECAUSE YOU'D RATHER NOT CONFRONT WHAT HAPPENED HERE? TO DISTRACT YOURSELF?

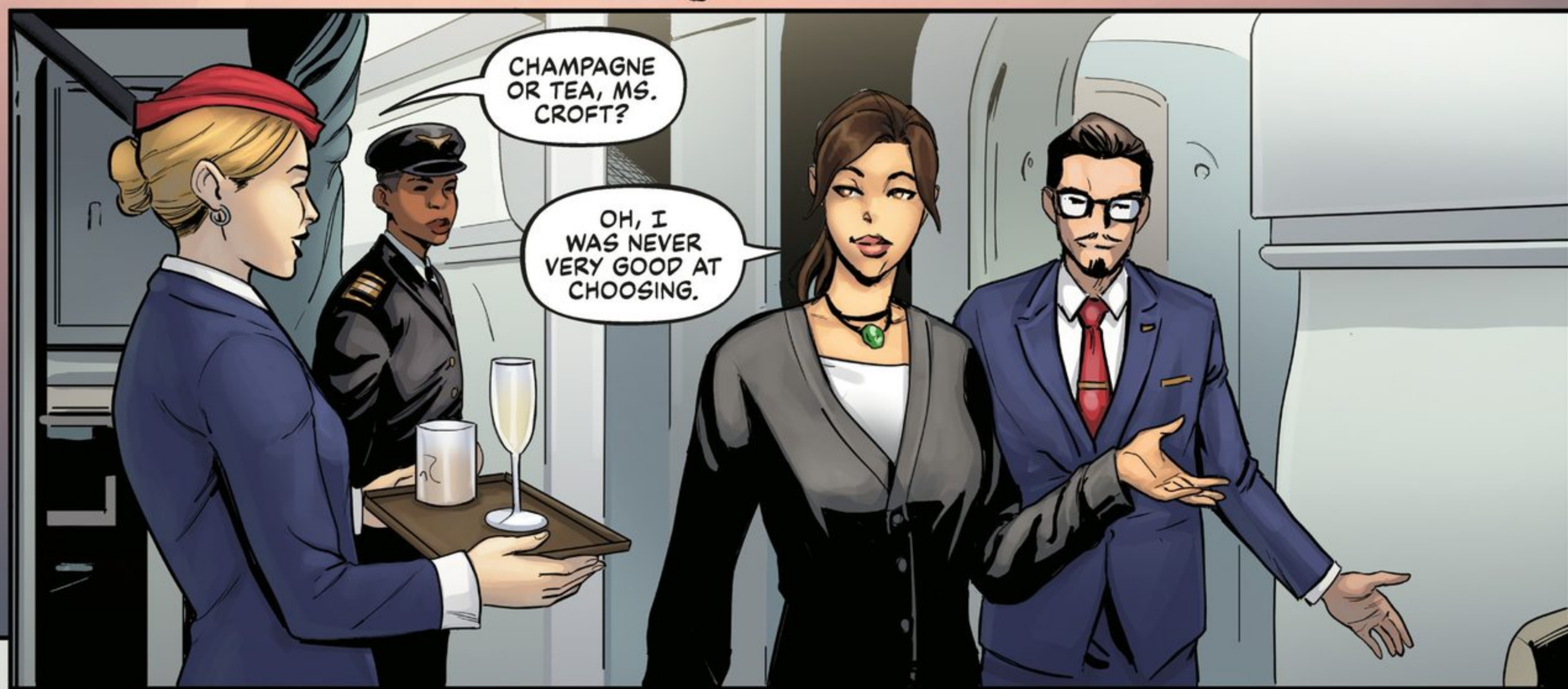
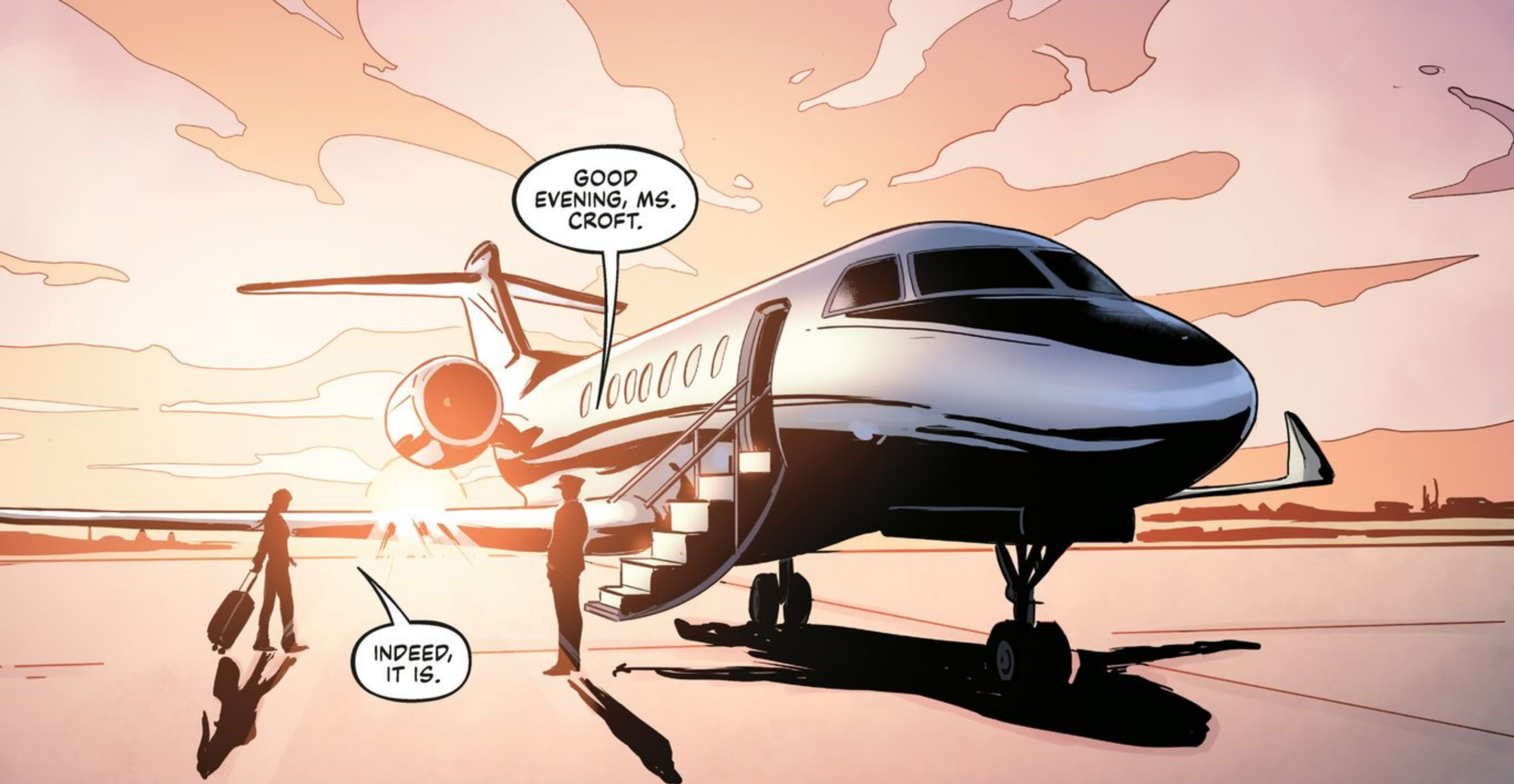


YOUR POINT IS WELL TAKEN, I PROMISE. THERE'S MORE TO IT AND IT'S COMPLICATED, BUT, IRONICALLY, IT'S ALSO A LEGACY THING.



ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU BE THOUGHTFUL. NOT JUST ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT BUT WHO YOU WANT TO BE, ALL RIGHT? NOW...

...SHALL I DRIVE YOU TO THE AIRFIELD?



Barbara fidgeted, refusing to meet Crater's scrutiny. "Tonight is the first trial for our upcoming nuptials. Are you ready, my sad mortal?"





HEY, CROFT!
OVER HERE.



CARTER,
SO NICE TO
SEE--

IT'S BEEN
TOO...ER--

ARE WE
HUGGING,
OR...?



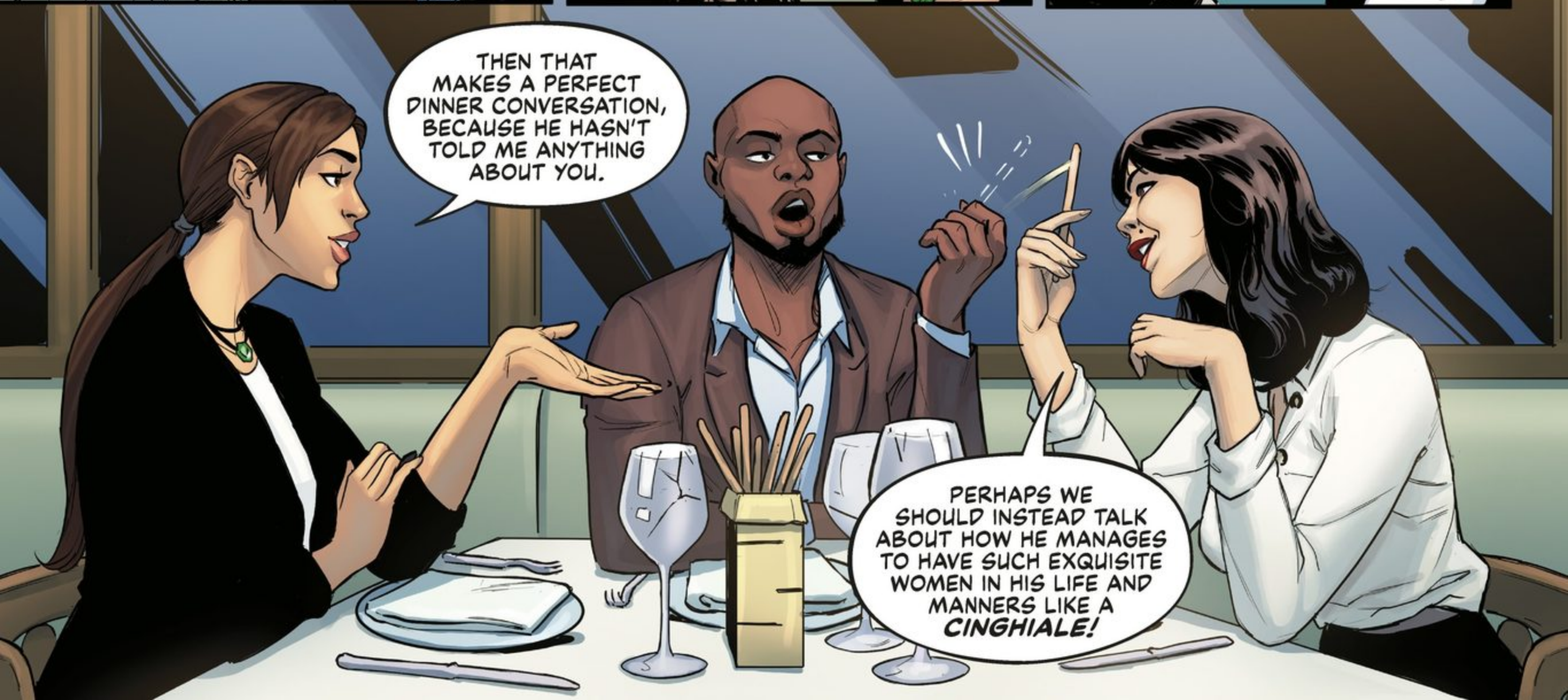
CARTER,
DON'T MAKE THIS
AWKWARD!



LARA!
CIAO, BELLA. MI
CHIAMO ANNA
GALLO.



HO SENTITO
MOLTO PARLARE
DI TE!



THEN THAT
MAKES A PERFECT
DINNER CONVERSATION,
BECAUSE HE HASN'T
TOLD ME ANYTHING
ABOUT YOU.

PERHAPS WE
SHOULD INSTEAD TALK
ABOUT HOW HE MANAGES
TO HAVE SUCH EXQUISITE
WOMEN IN HIS LIFE AND
MANNERS LIKE A
CINGHIALE!





JUST GIVE ME A LITTLE, MY LOVE.

NO! YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO LARA AND GOTTEN *TRE PALLINE*.

I GOT **FOUR** SCOOPS, ACTUALLY.

WILL YOU MARRY ME?



I'LL CONSIDER IT, BUT I INSIST YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE STUDYING. YOU SAID YOU'RE A STUDENT?

YES, I'M IN MY FINAL YEAR OF AN ART HISTORY PROGRAM. I KNOW I LOOK A BIT OLD TO STILL BE STUDYING--



OH! ER, NO, DARLING. NOT AT ALL!

YOU'RE POSITIVELY RADIANT WITH--WITH--*LA BELLEZZA DELLA GIOVENTÙ*.



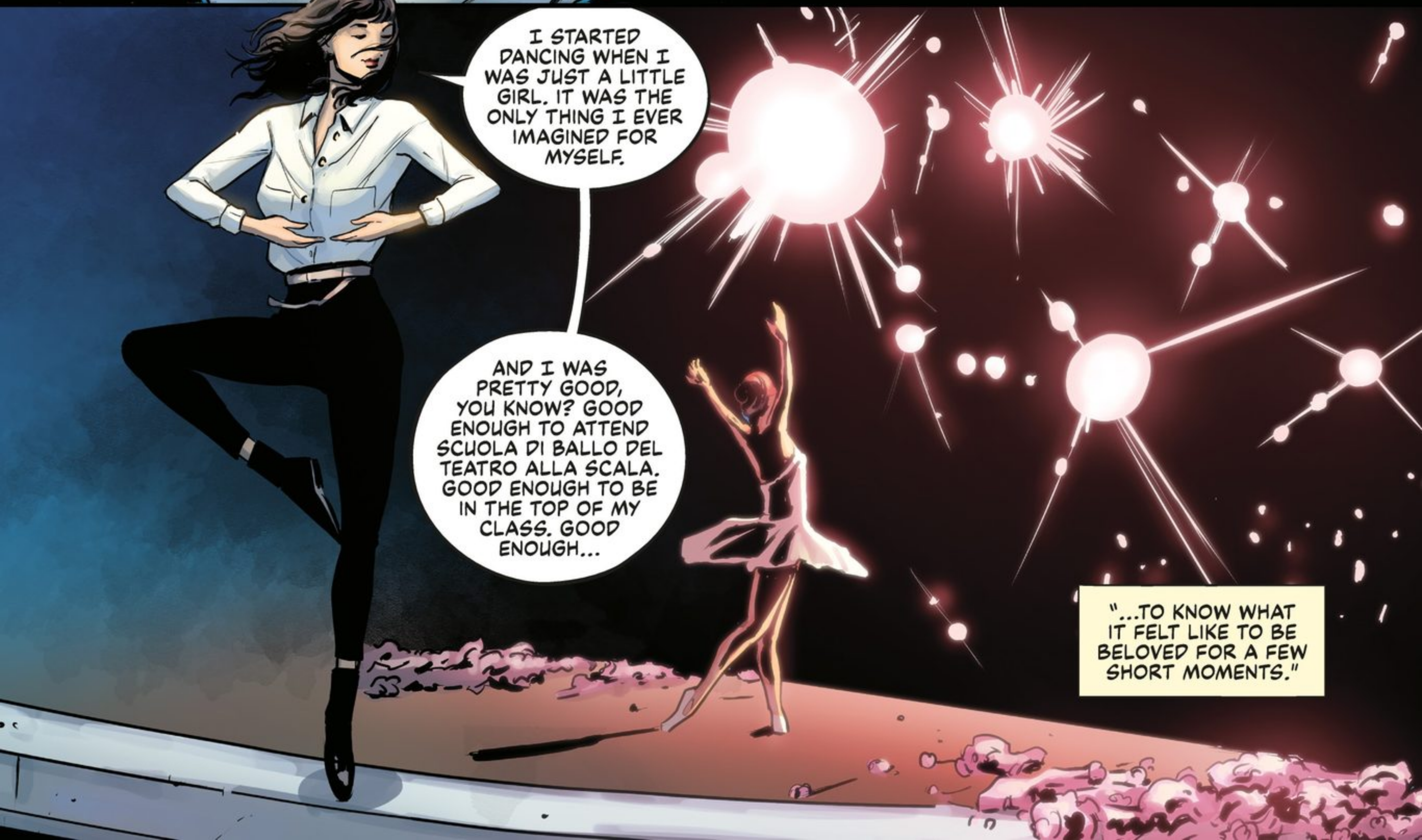
ITALIAN WOMEN DON'T FEAR AGING, CARTER. AS THEY SAY, *A TAVOLA NON SI INVECCHIA.*

AND YOU SPEAK ITALIAN!

SO DID I!



YES, BUT MY ACCENT IS BETTER.





AND THEN WHAT?



I MISSED EATING GELATO, AND ART HISTORIANS HAVE CAREERS THAT DON'T DESTROY THEIR BODIES.

DID YOU EVER PERFORM HERE?



NO, I NEVER PERFORMED AT PALAIS GARNIER, BUT...

BUT SHE DID ME A FAVOR AND MADE THE TRANSITION TO GET HERE SEAMLESS. BRAVO, DARLING.

THE JOB. IT'S HERE?



IN THE CATACOMBS.

I KNOW YOU'RE AN EXPERT CLIMBER, CROFT, AND I THOUGHT YOU'D BE PERFECT TO HELP ME, SINCE WHAT WE'RE RETRIEVING HAS TO GO TO ITALY ANYWAY.

THAT EXPLAINS THE GOWN.

I'LL GIVE YOU TWO A MOMENT.



IT PAINS ME TO SAY THIS, BUT I NEED THIS JOB, CROFT. MY REPUTATION HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE EGYPT, AND...

...AND I'M BARELY SCRAPING BY. THIS CLIENT HAS MORE WORK FOR ME IF I PULL THIS OFF, AND HE HAS FRIENDS WHO ARE COLLECTORS. IT'S GOING TO BE MY WAY BACK INTO THE SOCIETY.

PLEASE? I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU NEED ME TO DO IN ITALY, NO QUESTIONS ASKED. WE CAN LEAVE TOMORROW NIGHT AFTER WE'RE DONE, IF YOU LIKE.





TOMORROW IS THEIR ANNIVERSARY GALA--YOU **DON'T** WANT TO KNOW WHAT I HAD TO DO TO GET TICKETS--AND THE PLACE WILL BE PACKED.

I'LL COME EARLY TO HIDE OUR CLIMBING EQUIPMENT.

MY FRIEND RENE WORKS ON THE CLEANING CREW AND HE HAS THE PERFECT SPOT SO WE WON'T BE SEEN CARRYING IT IN.



IT SHOULD ONLY TAKE US AN HOUR OR SO TO GET THROUGH THE CATACOMBS, GRAB WHAT WE NEED, AND THEN...

CARTER, DON'T--



THAT'S FINE. I WORK BETTER ALONE.

YOU CAN'T. THE CLIMB NEEDS TWO PEOPLE. I'LL CALL MY CLIENT IN THE MORNING AND TELL HIM I CAN'T DO IT. I'LL ALSO SEE IF I CAN FIND SOMEONE TO HELP YOU IN ITALY.

MA COSA DICI?



DARLING, NO. IT'S FAR TOO DANGEROUS. LARA AND I ARE PROS AT THIS, AND WE'RE INSANE ON TOP OF THAT. I CAN'T LET YOU--

LET ME? WHO WAS THE ONE WHO JUMPED FROM A LITTLE RAILING WITHOUT FRACTURING HER FOOT IN **NINE** PLACES?

SHE HAS A POINT.

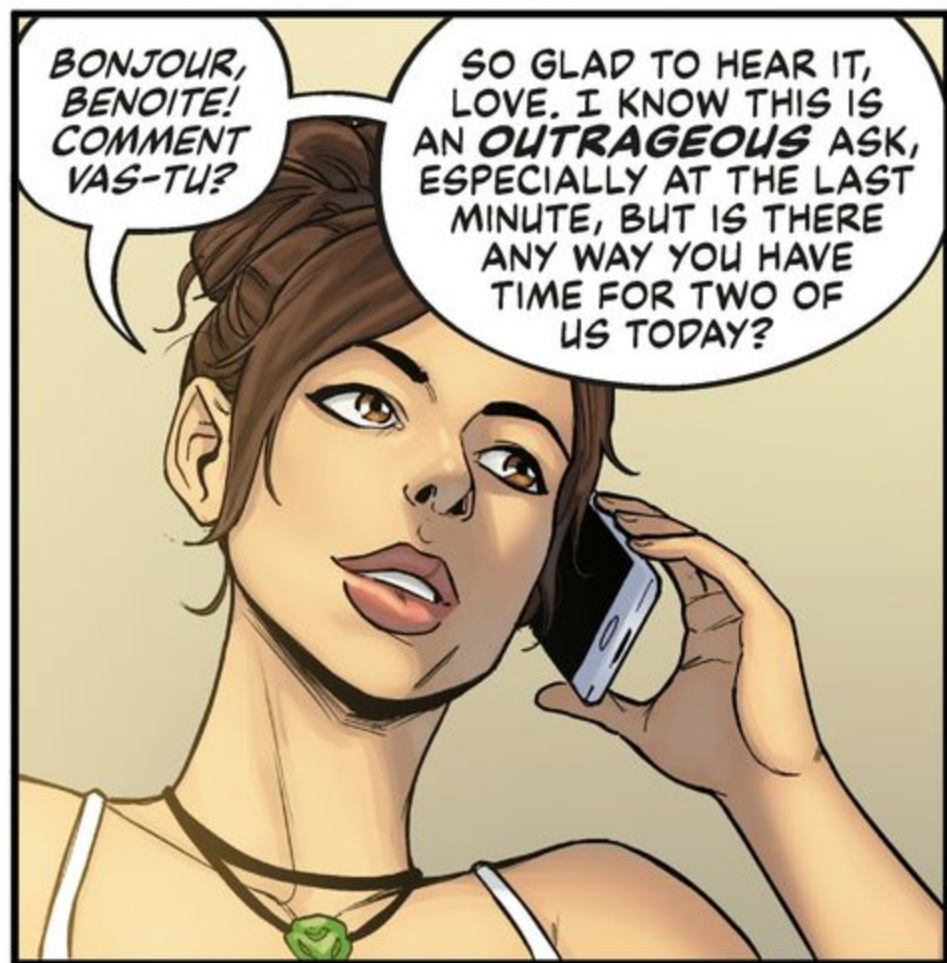


RENE, IT'S ME **AGAIN**. YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO MEET ME HOURS AGO FOR THE DROP-OFF-- I NEED YOU, MAN. PLEASE CALL ME BACK.



WHYYYYY IS EVERYTHING GOING WRONG! THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE **EASY**.

EASY DOESN'T MEAN **UNCOMPLICATED**. BESIDES, I HAVE A SOLUTION.



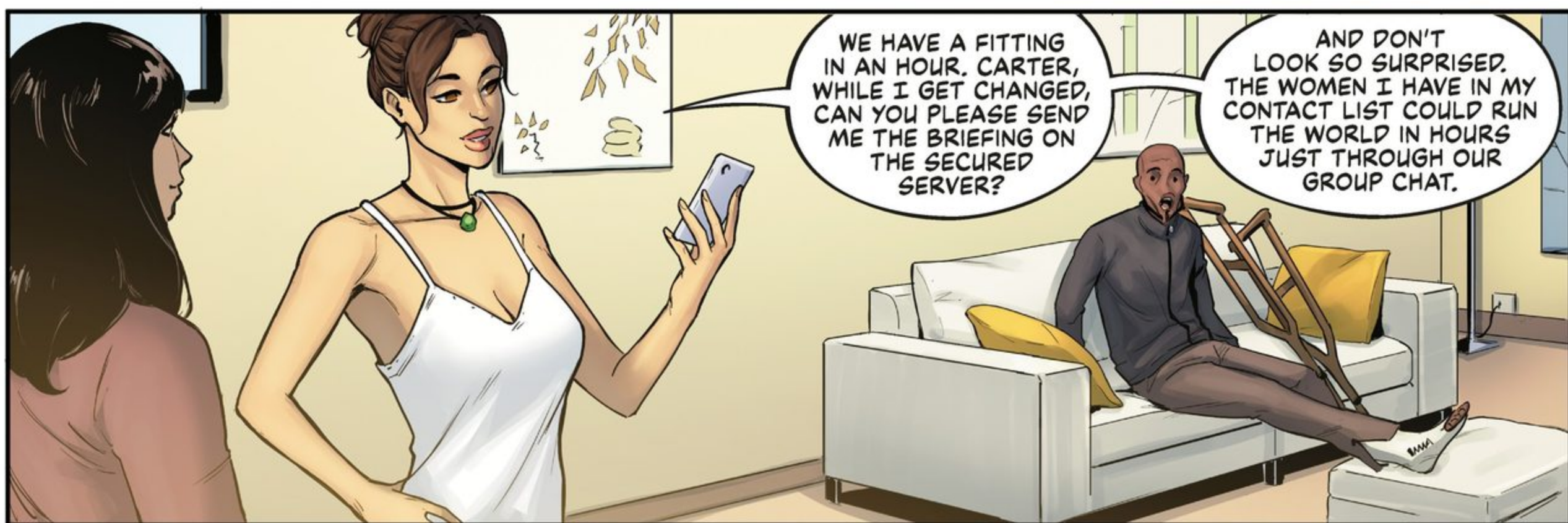
BONJOUR, BENOITE! COMMENT VAS-TU?

SO GLAD TO HEAR IT, LOVE. I KNOW THIS IS AN **OUTRAGEOUS** ASK, ESPECIALLY AT THE LAST MINUTE, BUT IS THERE ANY WAY YOU HAVE TIME FOR TWO OF US TODAY?



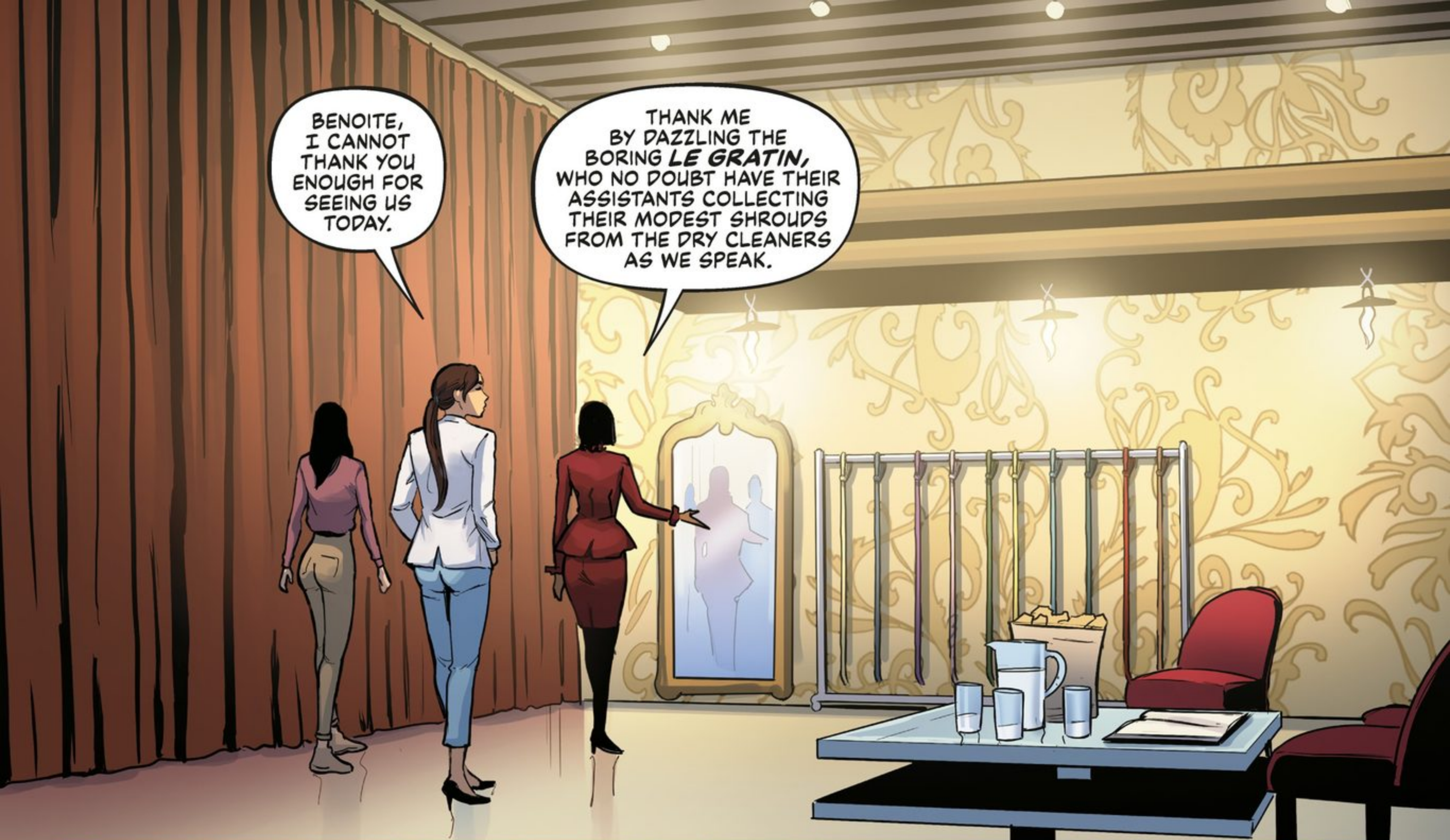
YOU ALREADY HAVE MY MEASUREMENTS, BUT SHE'S ABOUT A 36 OR 38... BENOITE, YOU'RE **PSYCHIC**. THAT'S **EXACTLY** WHAT WE NEED.

TU ES UN ANGE. SEE YOU THEN!



WE HAVE A FITTING IN AN HOUR. CARTER, WHILE I GET CHANGED, CAN YOU PLEASE SEND ME THE BRIEFING ON THE SECURED SERVER?

AND DON'T LOOK SO SURPRISED. THE WOMEN I HAVE IN MY CONTACT LIST COULD RUN THE WORLD IN HOURS JUST THROUGH OUR GROUP CHAT.



BENOITE,
I CANNOT
THANK YOU
ENOUGH FOR
SEEING US
TODAY.

THANK ME
BY DAZZLING THE
BORING *LE GRATIN*,
WHO NO DOUBT HAVE THEIR
ASSISTANTS COLLECTING
THEIR MODEST SHROUDS
FROM THE DRY CLEANERS
AS WE SPEAK.



HMM. YOU'LL
WANT SOMETHING
DYNAMIC, NO DOUBT,
NYLON, AS WELL AS
THE HARDWARE...

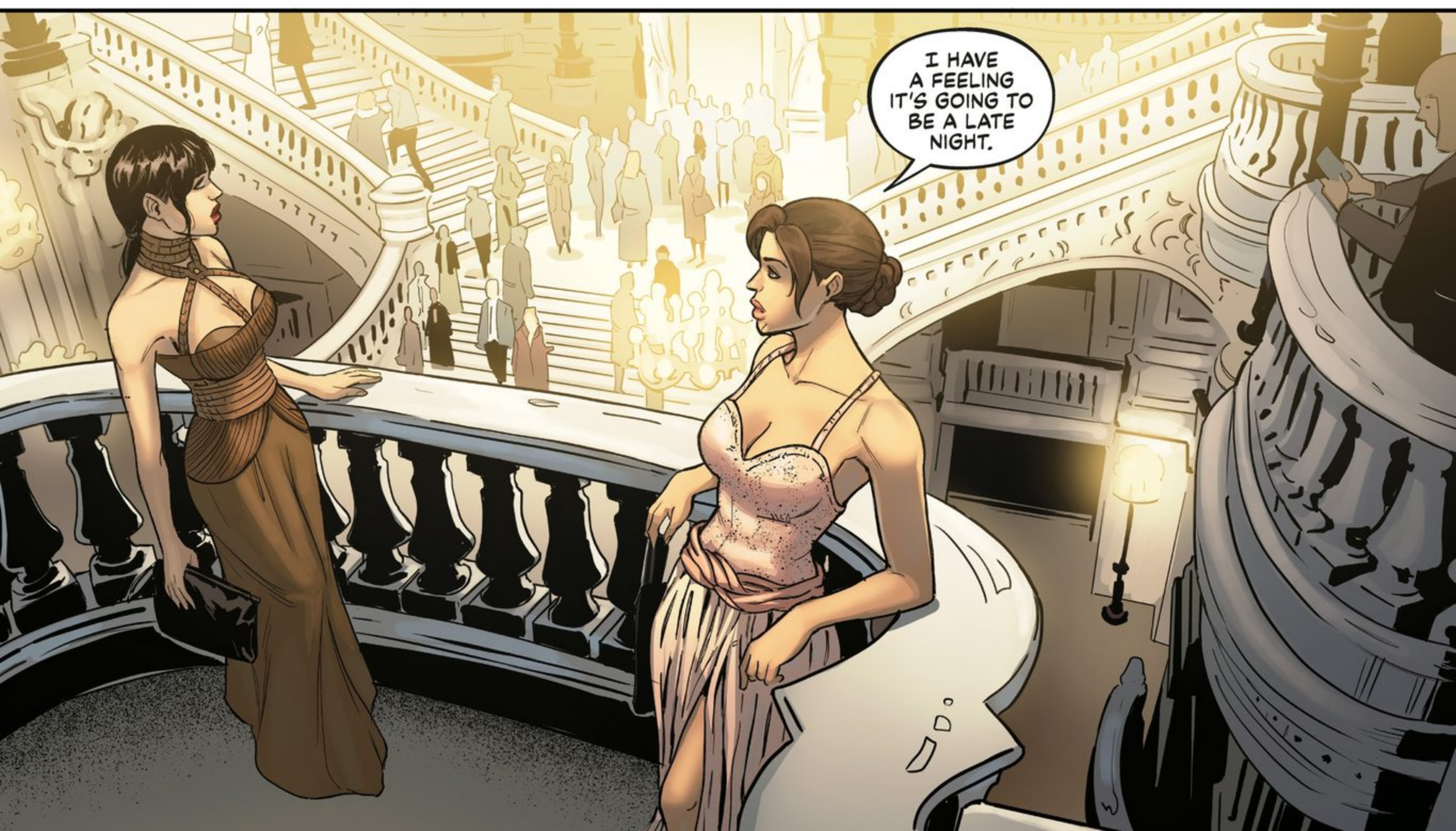
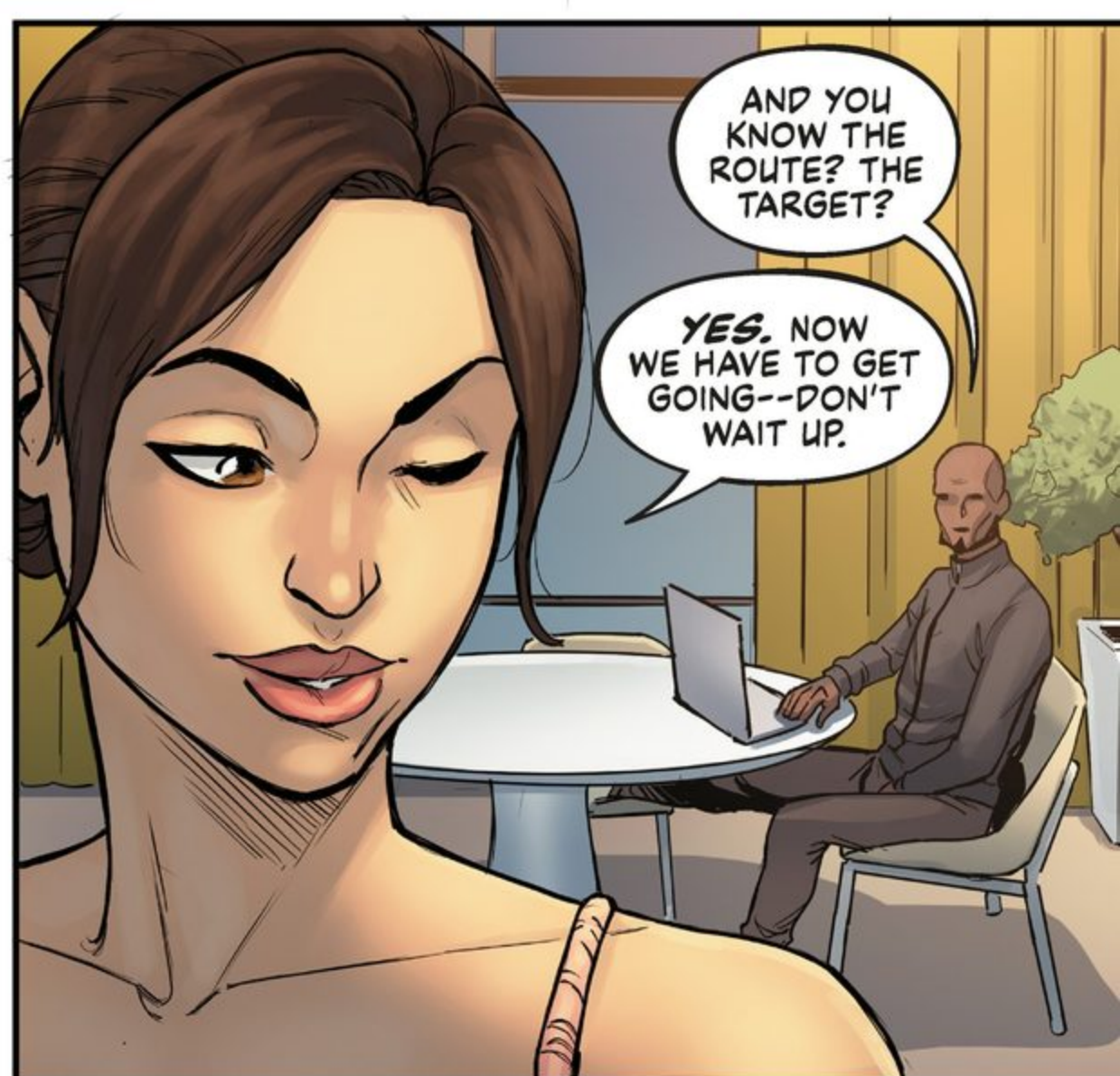
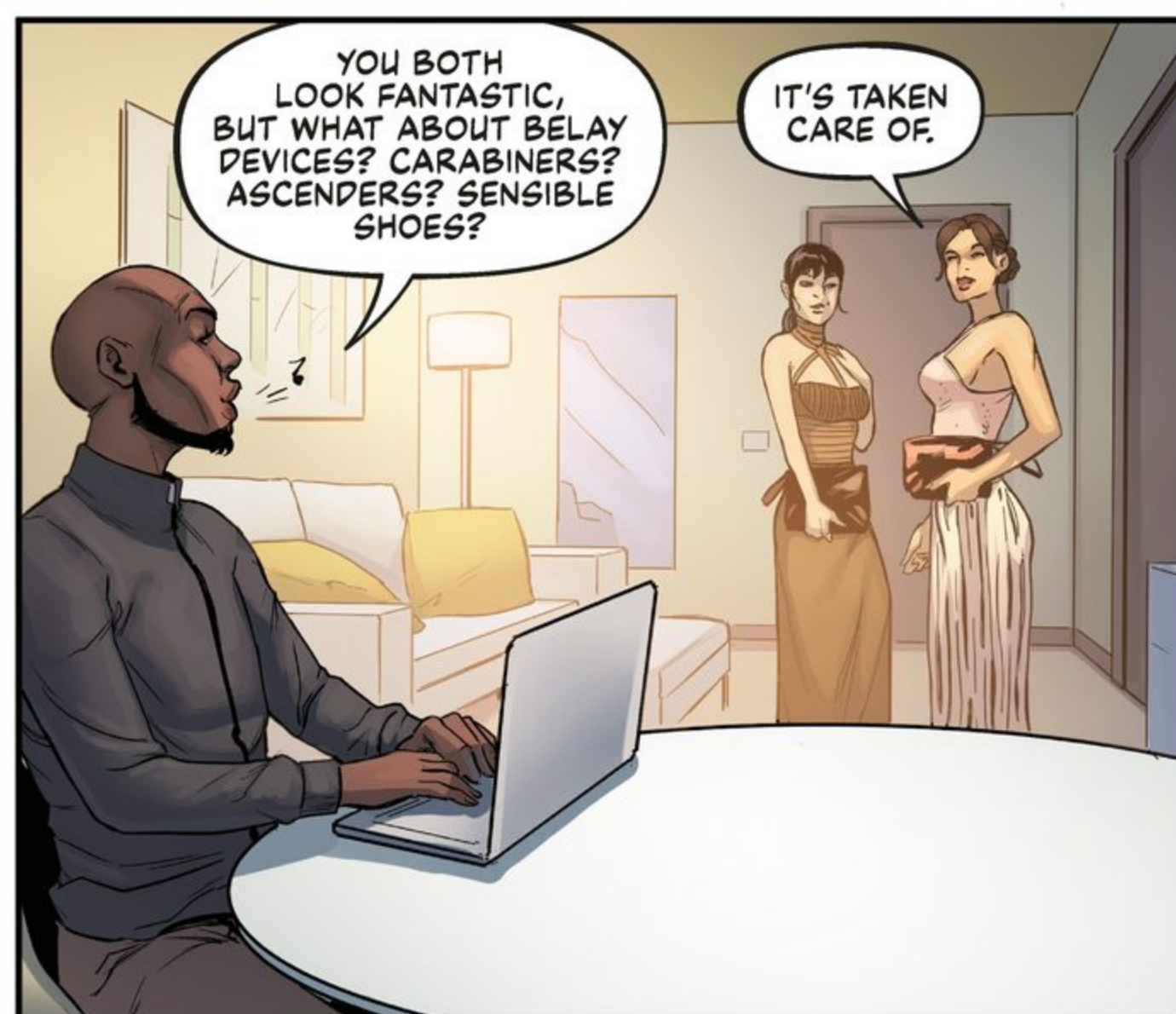
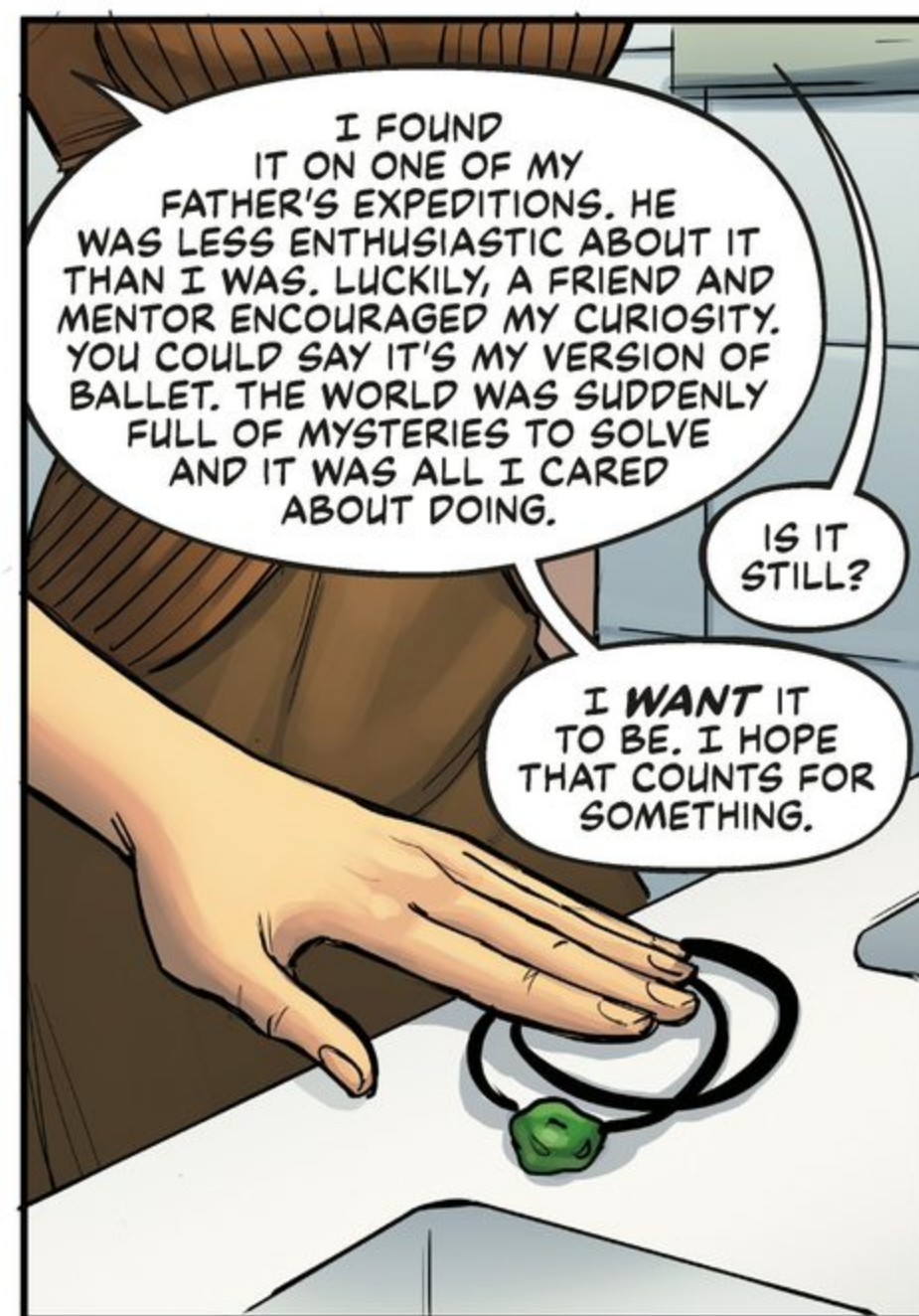
YOU'RE
MAKING OUR
DRESSES OUT
OF ROPE?



I AM
DESIGNING
COUTURE
GOWNS...



...IT JUST SO
HAPPENS THAT
ROPES ARE MY
RECREATIONAL
SPECIALTY.



I THOUGHT
THAT THE SECURITY
GUARD WAS FOLLOWING
US, BUT WE DID IT!
WE'RE IN!

WE STILL
HAVE A WAY TO GO.
THE TARGET IS AT THE
LOWEST LEVEL, IN THE
CENTER OF THE OPERA
HOUSE. WHICH
MEANS...



I FORGOT
TO ASK IF YOU
CAN SWIM.

YOU SHOULD
HAVE ASKED ME
IF MY VACCINES
ARE UP TO
DATE.

YOU'RE
QUITE FUNNY,
YOU KNOW.

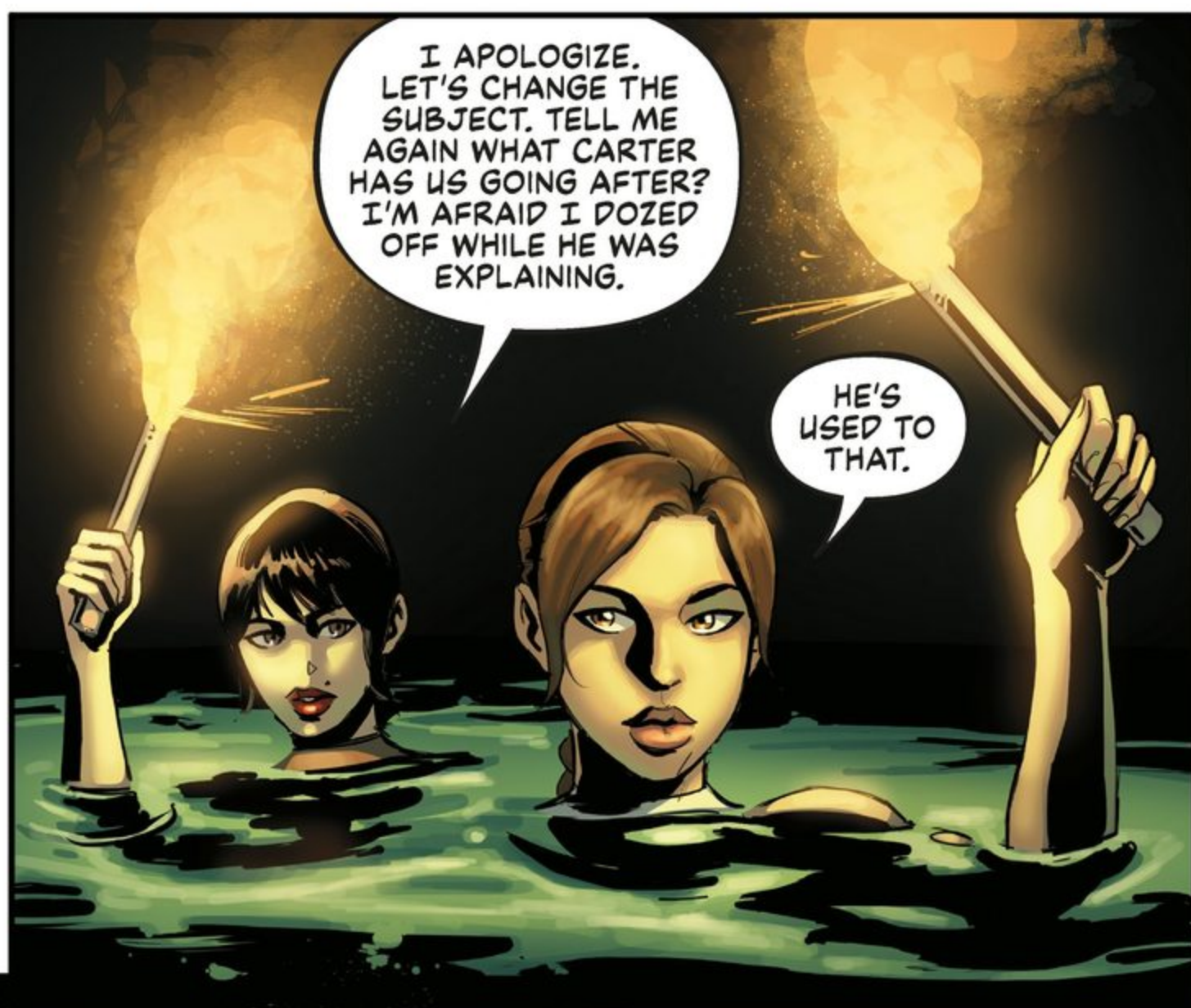


I TAKE AFTER
MY FATHER. HE WAS
A HARSH BUSINESSMAN,
BUT HE HAD A WICKED
SENSE OF HUMOR.

IF HE'S HALF
AS HILARIOUS AS
YOU, I'D LOVE TO
MEET HIM.

YOU
CAN'T, I'M
AFRAID.

HE WAS
MURDERED.



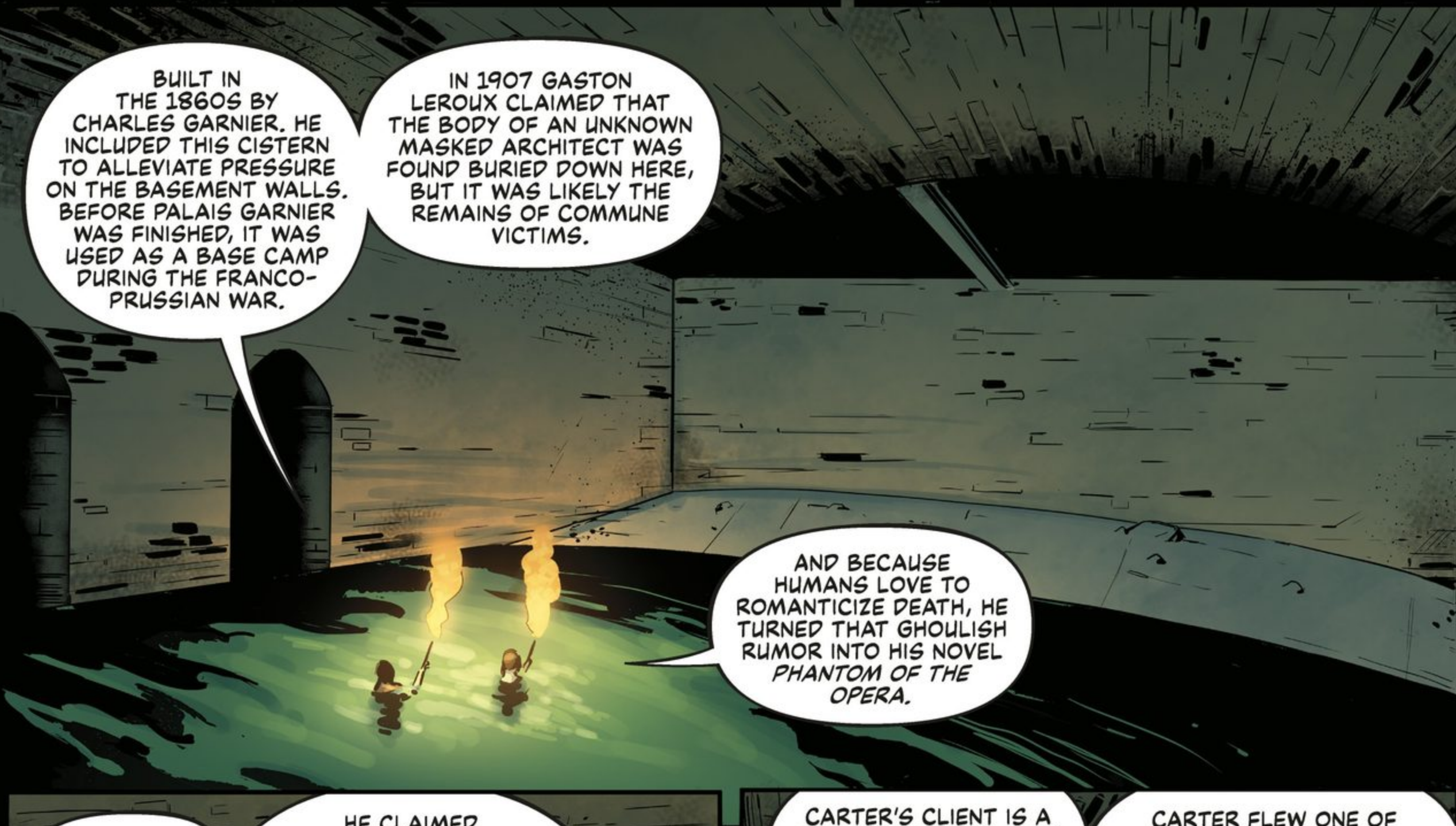
I APOLOGIZE. LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT. TELL ME AGAIN WHAT CARTER HAS US GOING AFTER? I'M AFRAID I DOZED OFF WHILE HE WAS EXPLAINING.

HE'S USED TO THAT.



C'MON-- THIS WAY.

YOU KNOW THE BUILDING'S HISTORY, I PRESUME?



BUILT IN THE 1860S BY CHARLES GARNIER. HE INCLUDED THIS CISTERN TO ALLEVIATE PRESSURE ON THE BASEMENT WALLS. BEFORE PALAIS GARNIER WAS FINISHED, IT WAS USED AS A BASE CAMP DURING THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR.

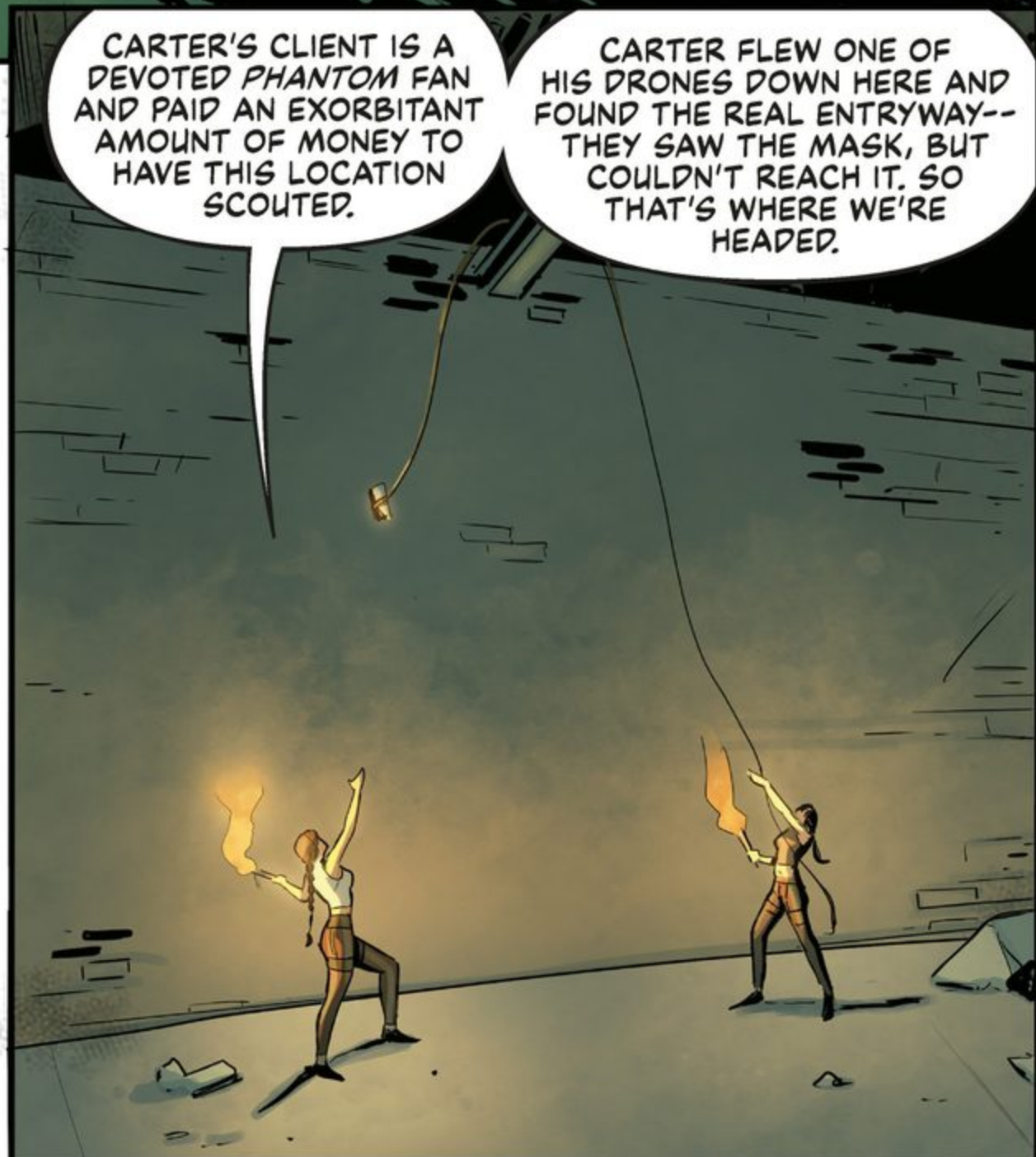
IN 1907 GASTON LEROUX CLAIMED THAT THE BODY OF AN UNKNOWN MASKED ARCHITECT WAS FOUND BURIED DOWN HERE, BUT IT WAS LIKELY THE REMAINS OF COMMUNE VICTIMS.

AND BECAUSE HUMANS LOVE TO ROMANTICIZE DEATH, HE TURNED THAT GHOULISH RUMOR INTO HIS NOVEL PHANTOM OF THE OPERA.



LEROUX'S NOVEL IS WHY WE'RE HERE.

HE CLAIMED THAT HE FOUND A FACE MASK OF SOLID GOLD IN A LAIR PAST THE CORE OF THE CISTERN. THESE ROOMS WERE SEALED DUE TO A CAVE-IN, AND WHAT WAS THOUGHT OF AS THE PHANTOM'S APARTMENTS ARE ACTUALLY ROOMS NEAR THE CISTERN'S ENTRYWAY, HOUSING THE THEATER'S TECHNICAL SERVICES.



CARTER'S CLIENT IS A DEVOTED PHANTOM FAN AND PAID AN EXORBITANT AMOUNT OF MONEY TO HAVE THIS LOCATION SCOUTED.

CARTER FLEW ONE OF HIS DRONES DOWN HERE AND FOUND THE REAL ENTRYWAY-- THEY SAW THE MASK, BUT COULDN'T REACH IT. SO THAT'S WHERE WE'RE HEADED.



YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT, YOU KNOW. ABOUT YOUR DAD.

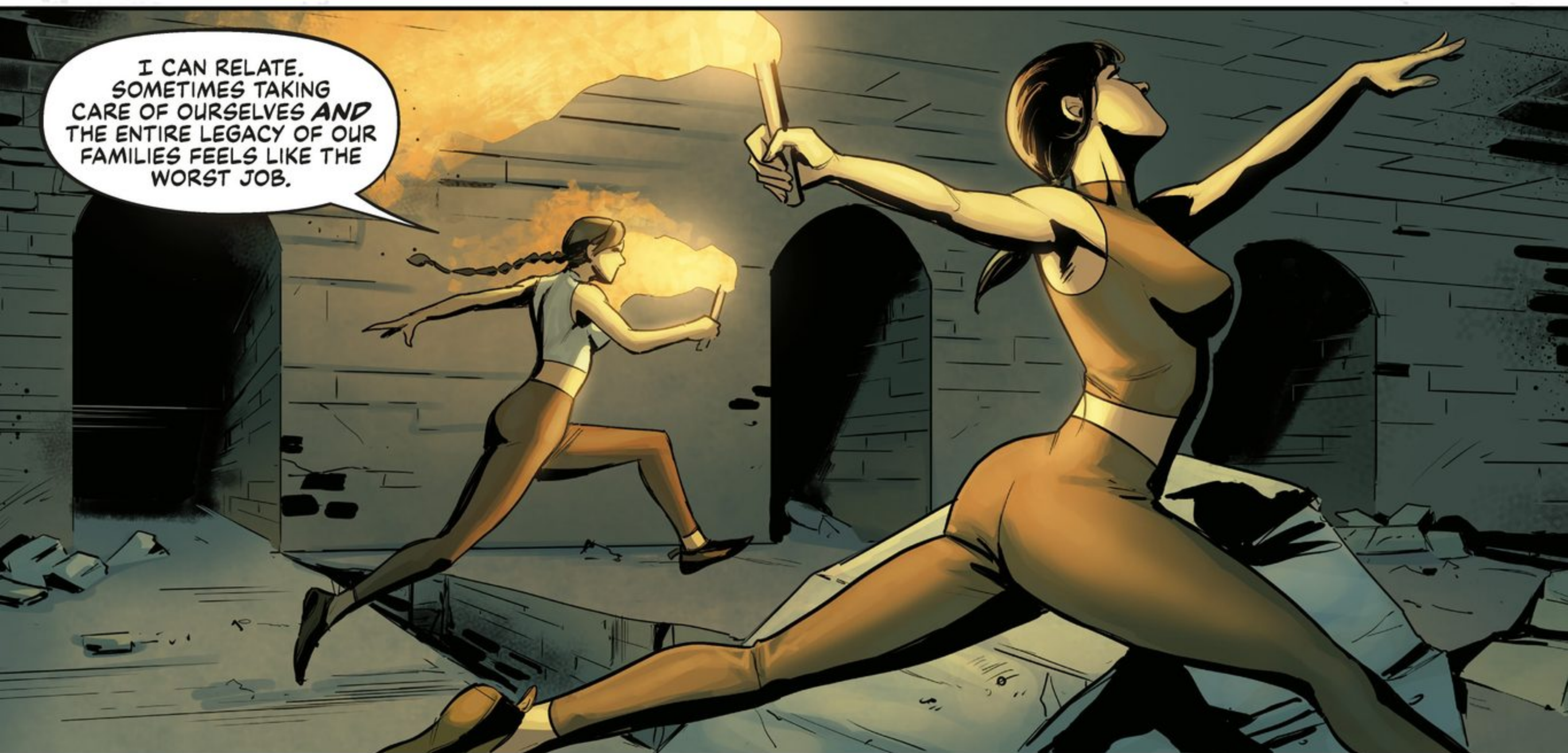
IT'S SOMETHING WE HAVE IN COMMON.



YOUR FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE **WOULD** PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHT, I'M SURE. BUT I'M ALL RIGHT.

YOU'RE THE BOSS.

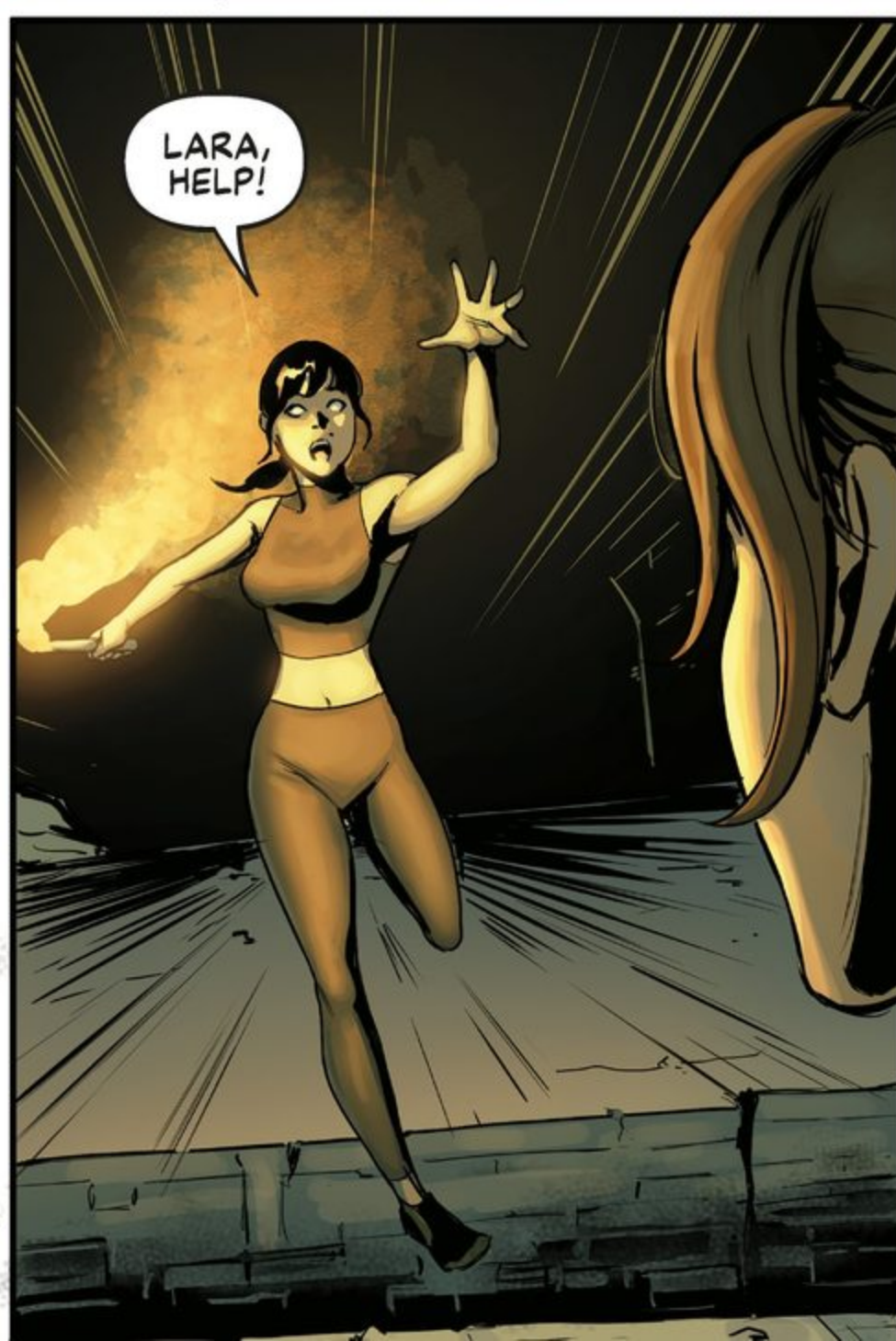
AS HIS ONLY CHILD, UNFORTUNATELY, I AM.



I CAN RELATE. SOMETIMES TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES **AND** THE ENTIRE LEGACY OF OUR FAMILIES FEELS LIKE THE WORST JOB.



IT CAN TRULY EXHAUST US. ALL THAT RESPONSIBILITY, ALL THE SACRIFICE.



LARA, HELP!



I THOUGHT I COULD CLEAR IT, BUT--

IT'S OKAY, I'VE GOT YOU. DO YOU NEED A MOMENT?

NO, I'M FINE. LET'S JUST GET THIS OVER WITH.



THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT I CAN SEE THE MASK.

AND THE BAD NEWS?

THERE'S NO WAY MY SHOULDERS ARE GOING TO FIT THROUGH HERE.

THEN LET ME.



ANNA, NO. YOU'VE BEEN INCREDIBLE SO FAR AND I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU, BUT THIS IS TOO DANGEROUS.

IT'S ONLY DANGEROUS IF I'M CARELESS.

AND I'M **NEVER** CARELESS.



GO SLOWLY. IT LOOKS STRUCTURALLY SOUND IN THERE, BUT BE CAREFUL.



THUNK

ANNA?



CRASH

ANNA?



HELP ME OUT OF HERE BEFORE I SCREAM.



YOU CAN SCREAM AS MUCH AS YOU WANT, BUT NO ONE WILL COME.

NOT FOR YOU, CARTER BELL.



YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'RE NOT THE REASON I'M HERE, OR ELSE I'D SEND LARA ON A SCAVENGER HUNT FOR YOUR ORGANS. MY ORDERS ARE TO **RETRIEVE**, NOT TO PLAY.

BUT JUST IN CASE YOU DECIDE TO TRY TO HOBBLE AFTER ME...



CARTER, MY LOVE, WAKE UP! LET'S ORDER CHAMPAGNE AND CELE---



OH MY GOD, LARA, LOOK! HE'S BEEN ATTACKED!

THEY MIGHT STILL BE HERE.



IS IT SAFE?!

Dear Lara,

I thought my first invitation to Santadi was enough to get your attention, but it seems you need more incentive. Don't worry—I'll keep your little memento safe along with the dagger. Unlike you, I know how it feels to have precious things taken from where they belong. If you delay much longer, who knows what I'll raid next. Tee-hee.

Ever Faithful,
The Postulant

THERE'S NO ONE HERE, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I'D SAY WE'RE SAFE.

TO BE CONTINUED



SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN...
THIS MONSTER!"

